

# WOMAN AT HOME AND ABROAD

## FUN ON THE ICE.

The Most Popular of Winter Sports For Women—Skating For Health and Pleasure.

Skating has long been termed the king of winter sports, and who should deny that the exhilarating pastime—the beautiful, swift, gliding motion over the smooth surface of a lake surrounded by trees covered with snow and frost, and the keen, cold wind, do make up a delightful outdoor amusement? When to these delights is added a companion with a strong arm and skillfulness, surely there are few girls who will not give skating the palm over all winter sports and many summer ones as well.

In these days, when there is no theme of such vital interest to women as physical culture in all its forms, any sport which will give good, healthful exercise is sure to have plenty of followers. Now, the prettiest and most graceful exercise in the list, and one which doesn't involve any sacrifices in the way of corsets, or heroics, in the line of heelless boots and bifurcated garments, health waists, or any of the other mortifications of the flesh, is skating. Woman may shine on the ice in her usual belongings, provided the skirt be made a convenient length. She may glide in single solitude or enter into dual or triple alliances. All that is demanded of her is that she be at home on her skates and have a graceful figure. Then the eyes of every man-aye, and of every woman-in sight will follow her with admiring and in the latter case often with envious glances. What more is needed to make skating popular?

Or if Mother Nature has been unkind and denied that lack of grace of motion that is of greater charm even than fairness of face, the best possible way in the world to acquire it is fearless skating by learning to balance when executing daring and intricate curves and complicated movements.

The girl who skates knows all about this. She found out all about it first by taking just the opposite course and executing headlong plunges and striking unexpected and far from graceful attitudes on her skates. Thus she learned the true meaning of the word poise.

The shining steel blades that the man likes best—just then—lighten on her snug little feet suddenly seem inspired with diabolical purpose directly she attempts to stand on them. She takes sudden and totally unprepared for postures, sitting or otherwise, with the skates waving in a horribly undignified way in the air in a manner never advocated by teachers of Delsarte.

If only she knew whether those skates were going to slide backward or forward, she would manage better, she thinks, with despair.

Then that same nice fellow comes up with a curve as graceful as a swallow, takes both her hands in his and glides backward as she follows. He talks all the time to her of something or other, looks into her eyes, laughs, makes her blush with a compliment on her coloring, and all at once, if she be the right kind of girl, she is skating and knows more about poise than all the big waisted physical culturists in the country, though she couldn't explain it to save her life. And that's another reason why girls love skating.

The only scientific way to skate is out of doors on a frozen river or lake, with the dazzling winter sunshine above your head and just enough of the element of danger to keep some one who is very solicitous for your safety and comfort quite near your side. And in the evening, when the smaller boys kindle the big bonfires on the shore, and the little coxes and inlets where the smoothest ice has been left lie in shadows like those of a painting by some old master, what finer place in the world to get out of sight of hard hearts and chaperons and give a little pleasure to the big fellow who has been helping you all the afternoon and now guides you thither with seeming accident, but with his heart beating so you can almost hear it? And what better time to say the things you know he has been on the point of saying many a time but could not get up the courage to say in a conventional drawing room under the glare of electric lights?

But perhaps the one thing that will make skating more popular than it could otherwise ever become is the fact that that great and powerful dame, Society, whose magic wand, much as we may claim to ignore it, rules us all, has looked on skating with a pleasing eye and taken it up. The fashionable girls in New York and other places, instead of spending all the winter months in the city wishing that Lent were over, nowadays hire themselves to country seats belonging to their parents, taking along a jolly crowd of young people of both sexes, and skating and tobogganing and sleighing parties occupy their time. And as Mrs. Society has smiled in this form of amusement, why, that is the most potent reason of all why women must skate.

Those, however, who do not care to go to the country for any period of time or who cannot afford the luxury of a country place have solved the problem of skating in the city by following the lead of Paris, which for many years has had its Palais de Glace.

The Palais de Glace is simply a circus where ice replaces the sawdust floor, and the walls are paneled with mirrors and painted with scenes from the Mediterranean. Electric light pours down from the chandeliers, gas lamps keep the building at a comfortable temperature, and the chemical fluids flowing through innumerable pipes below

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among the poor; a society for the aid of sick working women; a society for the insurance of sick working women and girls, and a society for the education of servants. Practical work of this kind among women is the best earnest of the suffrage which will surely come. Last year the government passed a law conferring almost an equal suffrage upon women and making them eligible to nearly all municipal offices. This year, in token of this progress, Dutch women will hold a world's fair at The Hague, which is to be devoted solely to the exhibition of women's activities and industries. Side by side with this progress of women's work there has been an advance in the political field.

### Strange Order of Nuns.

There are several communities of silent monks, as, for instance, the Trappists, but these are not at all surprising in comparison with a community of silent women such as are to be found in the convent near Biarritz. These silent nuns, or silent sisters, never speak except to their mother superior.

During the past year we had the horse show, the cattle show, the flower show, the dog show and the innumerable doll shows, but all of them meant one thing. You are inclined to think that the horse show is meant to incite the breeding of finer horses, the flower show to make orchids more wonderful and chrysanthemums bigger, the dog show to induce the bringing forth of smarter puppies and the doll show to make popular handwork and charity. But that's all a mistake. They are for nothing of the sort. They are all for one cause—the encouragement of woman. You get a horse, or a flower, or a dog, or a many colored background to bring out her and her best gown. Nobody can deny that she rules the court, the camp, the grove, probably most of the men below, though I rather doubt her having to do anything with the saints above. She is the acme of self possession and parades around the tankard, the soft dirt or the linen cover and invites all the world to come and look at her. Sometimes she is very

on, when the matinee is over, you see her out for a walk. You see her if she has not been to the matinee. You see her bowing to this man and to that man while all the gay world is surging up and down and you are being punched to look at this one and to stare at that one of the many celebrities.

First, you meet big, blond, laughing May Irwin. She is dressed in a handsome, dark gown and wearing a huge chinchilla collar and a hat covered with plumes. She is as magnetic on the street as on the stage, and you feel as if you must stare at her as long as she is in sight. Then, looking like a lady in a picture book or one of Boucher's nymphs in a Worth frock, comes Lilian Russell, in town for the day and drawn by force of habit to the matinee Saturday afternoon. Her beautiful blond hair shows against her rich tinge of purple velvet, and her gown, a simple one of cloth, fits her as if the king of tailors had made it, while her feet and hands are perfectly shod and gloved.

Behind her, and while you are trying to get over the intoxication of her good looks, comes fascinating Sadie Martinot (by the bye, how old is Sadie Martinot? Has she found the fountain of eternal youth?) wrapped in some magnificent sables, and your eyes go from her to that lilylike looking woman, Mrs. Burke Roche, who rolls by in her father's carriage as somebody near you remarks that she is one of the American girls who presented her English husband with twin sons.

Bowing to